

This is my testimony regarding the Raised Bill No.5313 regarding an *act concerning visitation rights by grandparents*. This is my second time that I have voiced my concerns and despair regarding Connecticut's lack of a law to assist grandparents with reasonable visitation rights with their grandchildren.

I am a grandmother of a seventeen month old precious little girl. At this moment we are being allowed visitation with her but I worry how long this will last. My son and the mother, of his child, were never married and they have each moved on with their own lives separate from each other.

Reading over Connecticut's present statute, and this new proposed bill made me realize that either you do not understand what it is that we are asking for or that it is too hot a political/ controversial issue.

I would like to commend the committee that proposed extensive training for DCF workers regarding this issue because the majority of these special circumstances DCF will probably be involved.

Once again we (grandparents) are not asking to take away or infringe on any parent's rights. We are asking you to provide a reasonable/constitutional law for grandparents, under certain circumstances; to have recourse if they find themselves treading muddy waters in regard to their being denied visitation rights with their grandchildren providing a bonding has already taken place with their grandchild.

Referring back to Raised Bill No. 5313. This bill is worthless to both grandparents and their grandchildren in its present language. For example in section (b):

1. What do you consider "clear and convincing evidence," that the grandparent has to provide to the judge?
2. "That the parent has been absent for a significant period of time." When I first read this sentence I immediately assumed you were referring to the fact that the parent had abanded their child into the care of a grandparent. Now you are talking about grandparents raising their grandchild which is a completely different issue. Also, what do you mean by a significant amount of time a day, a week, a month, six months, one year? Too vague a statement beside we never included this type of circumstance to be included in the law. This situation goes back to the grandparent raising their grandchild.
3. Here you go again with the phrase of our having to prove a "parental type of relationship." **NO! We do not want a parental type of relationship with our grandchildren!** We simply want to be grandparents. Besides it is almost impossible to prove this "parental type of relationship." We want the wording to change to a significant type of a relationship.
4. "The child would suffer real or substantial harm or neglect if visitation is not granted." How does one prove this statement? There are no black and blues on the outside but what about the mental and emotional agony a child goes through when one moment their beloved grandparents are there involved in their lives and the next moment their gone??
5. "Visitation is in the best interest of the child and the state." What exactly are you trying to convey in this statement? I understand in the best interest of the child but before you give the state, being DCF that power the appropriate training needs to have been carried out and attested to.

As I mentioned in an earlier email to Senator Musto we are the Baby Boomer Generation who are willing to go the distance to change any injustice we feel is unfair not only to us but now to our grandchildren. Thank-you for listening to me and I hope you take my comments and suggestions seriously.

Respectfully,

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